



The Old Ironsides Report

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1AD Soldiers Make “Back to School” Special

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BAGHDAD, Iraq - The 123rd Main Support Battalion (MSB) is always working hard to keep the 1st Armored Division operating smoothly. Soldiers are running convoys, repairing vehicles and equipment, processing various classes of supply and providing medical services. Despite this high tempo operation, the soldiers of the “Mighty Main” have taken the time and extra effort to directly impact the lives of local Iraqi citizens.

When Maj. Perley, a civil affairs officer, mentioned helping to rebuild a local school, LTC Clark W. LeMasters, Battalion Commander, jumped at the opportunity.

During the following weeks, over 50 soldiers volunteered to do whatever they could to make the small, rural schoolhouse a little nicer and a lot more fun. This school is located 15 miles south of Baghdad along the Euphrates River in the Jurfas Sakhr neighborhood. It provides education for some 350 students ranging in age from 7 to 14.

“What shocked me was the size of the classrooms,” said Sgt. Maj. Barton, command sergeant major for the 123rd MSB. “The children had to climb over the desks to get to their seats.” The school had no water source, no playground equipment, and minimal school supplies. With the help of artists, carpenters, and even family members in the battalion, all of that has changed.

Volunteers from all of the companies in the 123rd helped build swing sets, a water tank, a playhouse, picnic tables and more. Additionally, family members in Germany and the U.S. have been collecting donations of pens, pencils, paper and other school supplies. On the 22nd of August 2003, approximately 30 soldiers actually went to the school to help set everything in place.

Not only was this a chance to help out people who are less fortunate, but also provided an opportunity for cultural exchange. “Helping with the school project made me realize that the Iraqi people are no different from us, just less fortunate. They were very thankful for our help and truly welcomed us,” said Sgt. 1st Class Gilmore from Echo Company.



An Iraqi child helps 123rd Main Support Battalion soldiers paint the new volleyball poles. The “Mighty Main” helped a small schoolhouse become a nicer place for its students.

Every school visit ends with a mandatory meal at Sheik Kathair Abbas’s home. After a day of working in the sun, the soldiers head home feeling tired and in need of a shower, but overall satisfied for sharing a little of what we have. Many are looking forward for the chance to go back at the end of September to hand out pens and notebooks on the first day of school. The soldiers of the “Mighty Main” will have all types of memories from their deployment to Iraq, but helping school children will be one of the fondest.

On This Day In History: September 2nd 1939

At 4:45 a.m., some 1.5 million German troops invade Poland all along its 1,750-mile border with German-controlled territory. Simultaneously, the German Luftwaffe bombed Polish airfields, and German warships and U-boats attacked Polish naval forces in the Baltic Sea. Nazi leader Adolf Hitler claimed the massive invasion was a defensive action, but Britain and France were not convinced. On September 3, Poland declared war on Germany, initiating World War II.

NEWS

North Korea Rejects Anti-Nuke Demands

MOSCOW (AP) - Keeping up its bellicose rhetoric, North Korea on Monday dismissed U.S. demands that the communist nation scrap its nuclear program as "a game even kids won't play." North Korea took an angry, hard-line stance following last week's landmark talks in Beijing with the United States, South Korea, Japan, China and Russia about its nuclear programs.

British Weapons Adviser's Widow Testifies

LONDON (AP) - Weapons adviser David Kelly felt betrayed by his bosses at the Ministry of Defense after being caught up in a political storm over the government's case for war in Iraq, his widow testified Monday. Janice Kelly said that in the days before his apparent suicide, he was distressed over being identified as the possible source of a British Broadcasting Corp. report that claimed Prime Minister Tony Blair's office had exaggerated the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's weapons to justify war.

Jesse Jackson Arrested in Yale Protest

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) - The Rev. Jesse Jackson and 13 other people were arrested Monday after they blocked traffic on the Yale University campus in support of striking university service and clerical workers. Jackson led more than 1,000 people on a Labor Day march and rally in support of the striking workers before he was arrested.

Chaplain's thought for the day:

Nine Questions plus One

Years ago a professor at Stanford devised a checklist of nine questions that can be applied to any problem. Used as a self-quiz, the questions spur imagination. They are:

1. Is there a new way to do it?
2. Can you borrow or adapt?
3. Can you give it a new twist?
4. Do you merely need more of the same?
5. Less of the same?
6. Is there a substitute?
7. Can the parts be rearranged?
8. What if we do just the opposite?
9. Can ideas be combined?

-- Bits and Pieces, February, 1990, p. 20

I would add one more question: Have I asked God for help in making this decision?

ENTERTAINMENT

'Death Wish' Star Charles Bronson Dies

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Charles Bronson, the grim-faced tough guy who built a European following before making his mark in the United States with action films including the "Death Wish" series, died Saturday of pneumonia. He was 81. The actor died at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center with his wife at his bedside, publicist Lori Jonas said. He had been in the hospital for weeks, Jonas said. Bronson's father died when he was 10, and at 16 Charles followed his brothers into the coal mines of Pennsylvania. He was paid \$1 per ton of coal and volunteered for perilous jobs because the pay was better. Like other toughs in Scoop town, he made trouble and landed in jail for assault and robbery. He might have stayed in the mines for the rest of his life except for World War II. Drafted in 1943, he served with the Air Force in the Pacific, reportedly as a tail gunner on a B29. Having seen the outside world, he vowed not to return to the squalor of Scoop town. He was attracted to acting not, he claimed, because of any artistic urge; he was impressed by the money movie stars could earn. He joined the Philadelphia Play and Players Troupe, painting scenery and acting in a few minor roles. Bronson's first starring role came in 1958 with "Machine-Gun Kelly," an exploitation film made in eight days. The actor had often wondered if he was too manly to achieve instant stardom in his home country. "Maybe I'm too masculine," he said in a 1971 interview. "Casting directors cast in their own, or an idealized image. Maybe I don't look like anybody's ideal." During the height of his career, Bronson was hugely popular in Europe; the French knew him as "le sacre monstre" (the sacred monster), the Italians as "Il Brutto" (the ugly man). In 1971, he was presented a Golden Globe as "the most popular actor in the world." Bronson's first starring role came in 1958 with "Machine-Gun Kelly," an exploitation film made in eight days. He also appeared in two brief TV series, "Man with a Camera" (1958) and "The Travels of Jamie McPheeters" (1963). His status grew with impressive performances in "The Magnificent Seven," "The Great Escape," "The Battle of the Bulge," "The Sandpiper" and "The Dirty Dozen." But real stardom eluded him, his rough-hewn face and brusque manner not fitting the Hollywood tradition for leading men. His most controversial film came in 1974 with "Death Wish." As an affluent, liberal architect, Bronson's life is shattered when young thugs kill his wife and rape his daughter. He vows to rid the city of such vermin, and his executions brought cheers from crime-weary audiences. The character's vigilantism brought widespread criticism, but "Death Wish" became one of the big moneymakers of the year. The controversy accelerated when Bernard Goetz shot youths he thought were threatening him in a New York subway. The titles many of Bronson's films indicate their nature: lots of action, shooting, dead bodies. They were made on medium-size budgets, but Bronson was earning \$1 million a picture before it was fashionable. Among his starring films: "The Valachi Papers," "Chato's Land," "The Mechanic," "Valdez," "The Stone Killer," "Mr. Majestyk," "Breakout," "Hard Times," "Breakout Pass," "White Buffalo," "Telefon," "Love and Bullets," "Death Hunt," "Assassination," "Messenger of Death."